MARVEL COMICS
HULK
2051
ONCE IN A LIFETIME
PREQUEL TO HULK 2099 #1!

HULK 2099
IN
"FOR THE LITTLE PEOPLE"
DOWN IN THE SHADOWS OF THE SHAM-GLAM, HIGH-TECH V-R CORPS THAT MAKE L.A. RICH AND POWERFUL, THERE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO DO THE SWEATY, GRITTY, GRUNT WORK THAT MAKES THE WHOLE MESS RUN.
TODAY THE GRUNTS DECIDED TO FIGHT FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS. THEIR BOSSES DECIDED IT WAS EASIER TO KILL THEM THAN MESS WITH A STRIKE.
THIS WAS ALWAYS A TOUGH TOWN FOR UNIONS.
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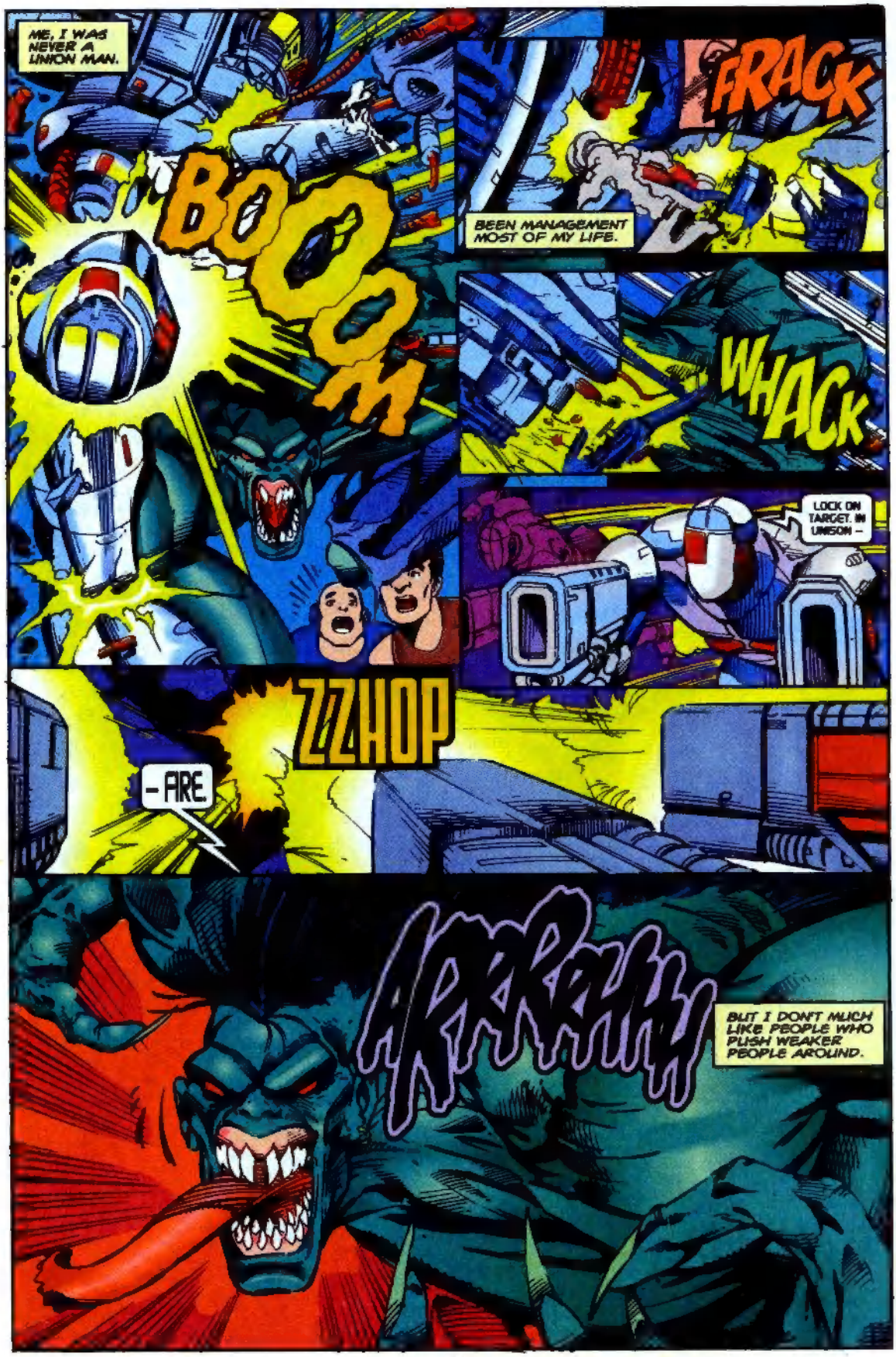
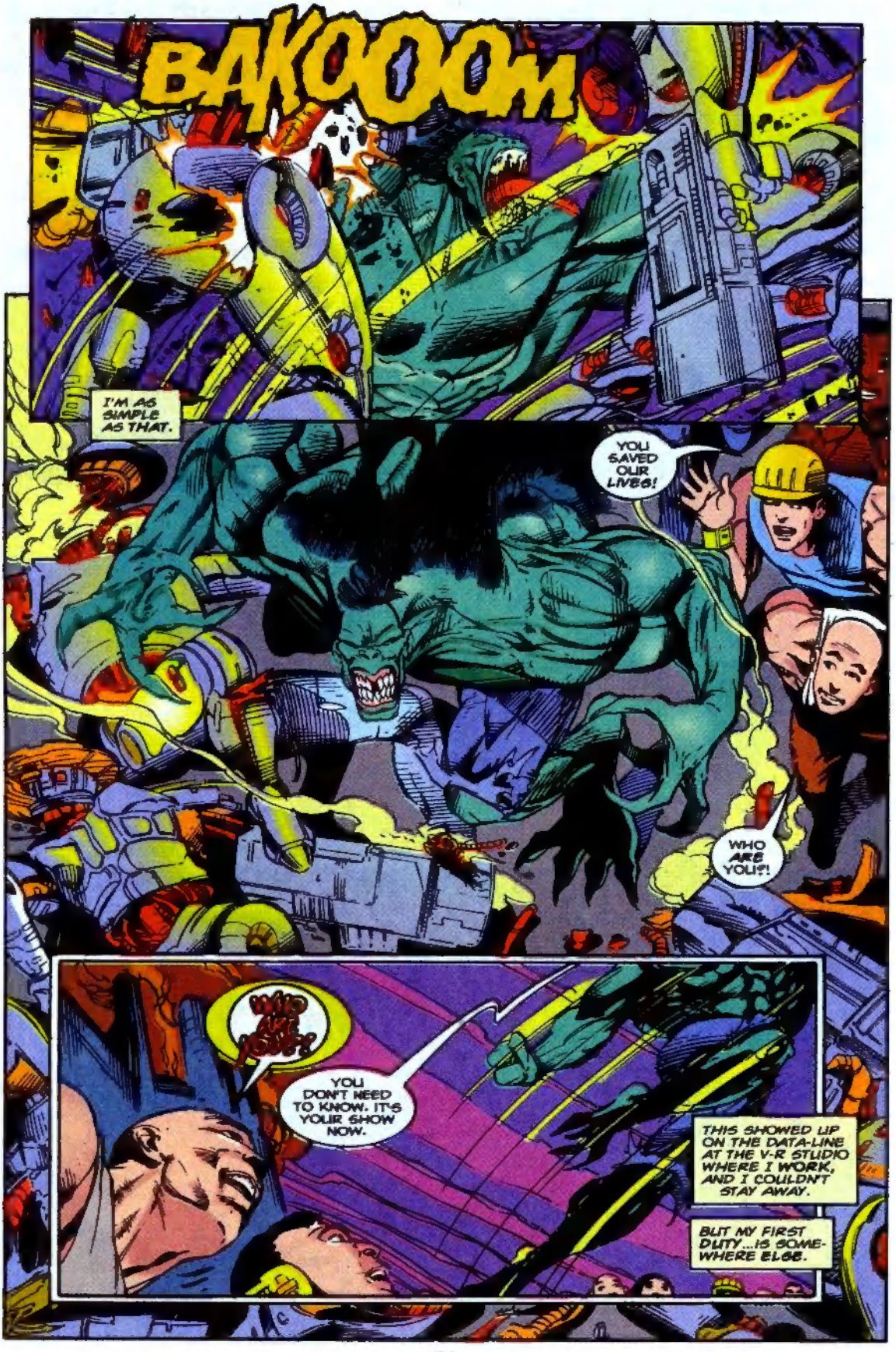
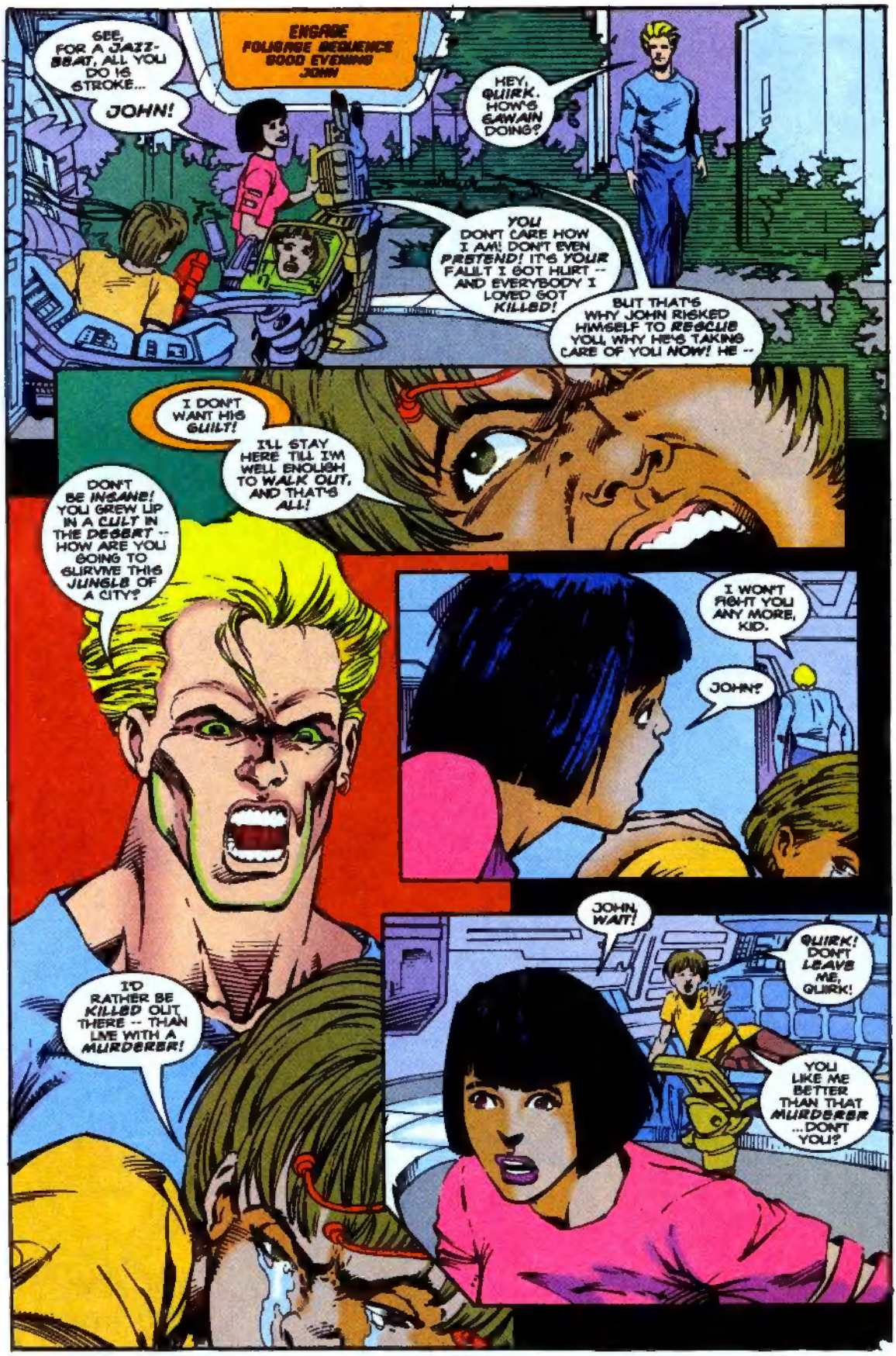
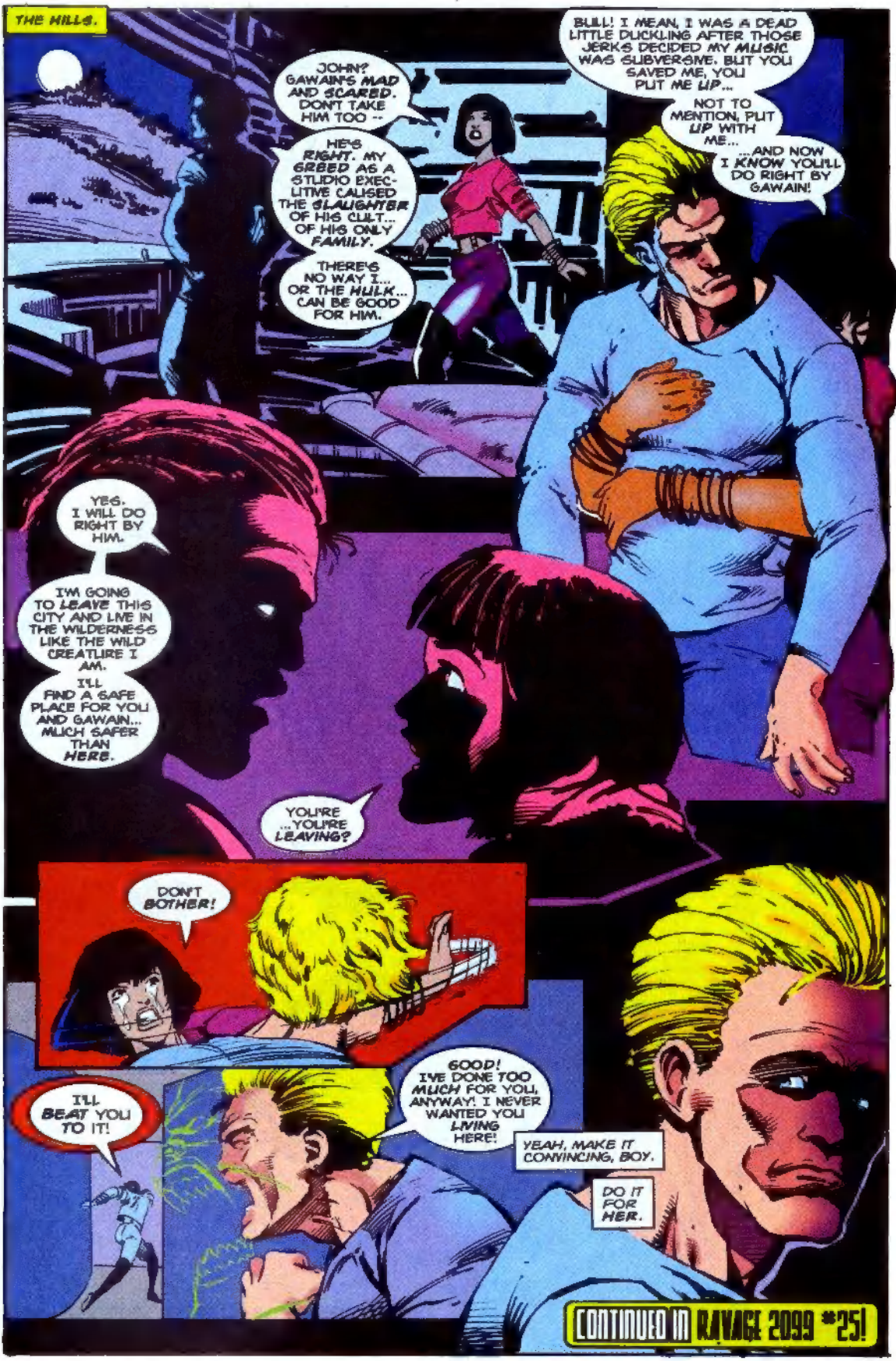

ME, I WAS NEVER A UNION MAN.
BOOOM
FRACK
BEEN MANAGEMENT MOST OF MY LIFE.
WHACK
LOCK ON TARGET. IN UNISON —
ZZHOP
- ARE
AAARRRR


BAKOOOOM
I'M AS SIMPLE AS THAT.
YOU SAVED OUR LIVES!
WHO ARE YOU!?!
YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW. IT'S YOUR SHOW NOW.
THIS SHOWED UP ON THE DATA-LINE AT THE V-R STUDIO WHERE I WORK, AND I COULDN'T STAY AWAY.
BUT MY FIRST DUTY...IS SOMEWHERE ELSE.

QUEEN TO KING'S BISHOP ONE.
AND THE BOARD IS NEARLY MINE. AS IS THAT FAR LARGER BOARD...
...OF GREATER LOS ANGELES.
MAKE YOUR MOVE, DROID, AS MY EQUALLY INEPT OPPONENTS MAKE THEIR SCATTERED AND GOALLESS MOVES.
YOUR QUEEN MOVES WITH THE WITLESSNESS OF A WORKERS' UPRISING. I WILL TAKE IT AS EASILY AS MY DROIDS WILL HAVE TAKEN THE WORKERS BY NOW.
THE LAST PIECE IS ABOUT TO FALL INTO PLACE.
MY CHECKMATE OF THIS CITY... AND THE WORLD'S COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK... WILL NOW BE --
SORRY TO INTERRUPT, SIR! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG AT THE METALLOID SYNTH-PLANT! SOMETHING DESTROYED A DOZEN TOP-LINE DROIDS...AND SAVED THE WORKERS!
"SOMETHING"?! WHAT SOMETHING COULD DO THIS?!
THEY SAID... IT WAS A MONSTER, SIR!
A MONSTER...
ZAK

OUT PAST THE SWAMP OF THE CITY...THE HILLS.
DRY AND DUSTY, CLEAN AND FREE.
IT WAS IN THE DESERT THAT I GOT THIS BODY. IT'S THE DESERT THAT THE HULK'S BODY CRAVES.
BUT SOMEBODY IN THIS CITY NEEDS ME.
AT LEAST FOR NOW.
SO I PLAY THE GAME. HIDE IN THE SHADOWS.
THOOM
PRESS MY POWER...
...PRESS MY PAIN...
YAAAUUGHH
...INTO THE WORMY PINK BODY THAT USED TO BE ME.
HEY, GUY! YOU HEAR SOMETHING IN THERE?
IN THERE?
BETTER GET YOUR 'PHONES CHECKED, BUD.


SEE, FOR A JAZZ-BEAT, ALL YOU DO IS STROKE...
JOHN!
ENGAGE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE GOOD EVENING JOHN
HEY, QUIRK. HOW'S GAWAIN DOING?
YOU DON'T CARE HOW I AM! DON'T EVEN PRETEND! IT'S YOUR FAULT I GOT HURT -- AND EVERYBODY I LOVED GOT KILLED!
BUT THAT'S WHY JOHN RISKED HIMSELF TO RESCUE YOU, WHY HE'S TAKING CARE OF YOU NOW! HE --
I DON'T WANT HIS GUILT!
I'LL STAY HERE TILL I'M WELL ENOUGH TO WALK OUT, AND THAT'S ALL!
DON'T BE INSANE! YOU GREW UP IN A CULT IN THE DESERT -- HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SURVIVE THIS JUNGLE OF A CITY?
I WON'T FIGHT YOU ANY MORE, KID.
JOHN?
JOHN, WAIT!
QUIRK! DON'T LEAVE ME, QUIRK!
I'D RATHER BE KILLED OUT THERE -- THAN LIVE WITH A MURDERER!
YOU LIKE ME BETTER THAN THAT MURDERER ...DON'T YOU?


THE HILLS.
JOHN? GAWAIN'S MAD AND SCARED. DON'T TAKE HIM TOO --
HE'S RIGHT. MY GREED AS A STUDIO EXECUTIVE CAUSED THE SLAUGHTER OF HIS CULT... OF HIS ONLY FAMILY.
THERE'S NO WAY I... OR THE HULK... CAN BE GOOD FOR HIM.
BULL! I MEAN, I WAS A DEAD LITTLE DUCKLING AFTER THOSE JERKS DECIDED MY MUSIC WAS SUBVERSIVE. BUT YOU SAVED ME, YOU PUT ME UP...
NOT TO MENTION, PUT UP WITH ME...
...AND NOW I KNOW YOU'LL DO RIGHT BY GAWAIN!
YES. I WILL DO RIGHT BY HIM.
I'M GOING TO LEAVE THIS CITY AND LIVE IN THE WILDERNESS LIKE THE WILD CREATURE I AM.
I'LL FIND A SAFE PLACE FOR YOU AND GAWAIN... MUCH SAFER THAN HERE.
YOU'RE ...YOU'RE LEAVING?
DON'T BOTHER!
GOOD! I'VE DONE TOO MUCH FOR YOU, ANYWAY! I NEVER WANTED YOU LIVING HERE!
I'LL BEAT YOU TO IT!
YEAH, MAKE IT CONVINCING, BOY.
DO IT FOR HER.
CONTINUED IN RAVAGE 2099 #25!